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ture of American history. The bibliography and index are excellent but the maps hardly rise to mediocrity and are not in keeping with the excellence of the text.

J. S. REEVES.

John Brown, Soldier of Fortune: a Critique. By HILL PEEBLES WILSON. (Lawrence, Kansas: Hill P. Wilson. 1913. Pp. 450.)

KANSAS contributions to the controversy over the career of Old John Brown abound in extremes of eulogy and denunciation. In the books of Redpath, Hinton, and Wilder, he figures as patriot, martyr, and demigod, while writers of the dissenting school give him a very different character. Among the latter no one has surpassed Mr. Wilson in violence of condemnation. He contends that the John Brown who "lives in poetry, in song, in human hearts" is a fiction for which the hard, disillusioning facts afford no justification. These troublesome facts, as he finds them, are that John Brown's pre-Kansas business career was discreditable; that the story of his early hostility to slavery will not bear investigation; that he went to Kansas in 1855 mainly to retrieve his broken financial fortunes; that in the desperate winter of 1855-1856, no other available source of relief appearing, he abandoned the Free State cause and entered upon a career of outlawry; that "a brutal desire to get possession of their horses" led him to kill five men on the Pottawatomie Saturday night, May 24, 1856, and that the attack on Harper's Ferry was not simply a raid or foray, but a deliberate attempt to inaugurate servile war.

To support his interpretation of John Brown's career Mr. Wilson presents little if any new evidence. Possibly this statement should be qualified in regard to the Pottawatomie murders. It is said that another and confederate "band of thieves" aided Brown in disposing of the horses captured in this ghastly affair. The contention, argued at considerable length, may be true but it is substantiated by nothing more decisive than plausible conjectures. Mr. Wilson's book is essentially a revaluation of evidence already before the public.

Now in regard to the present state of the controversy two or three points may be regarded as substantially or at least probably settled by the half-century of investigation and discussion. One of them is that on the whole John Brown was a mischief-maker in Kansas. His record there—what with the horse-stealing, the brigandage, and the dreadful night upon the Pottawatomie—does not read well in the light of the present day. Then the seizure of Harper's Ferry violated every conceivable maxim of prudence and reason, unless by some possibility the town could be made the base of an instant and formidable servile insurrection. Though the pikes, revolvers, and Sharps' rifles in his possession seemed to be inconsistent with the declaration, John Brown denied that he had any such purpose. Again, if he had been killed in

the assault upon the engine house at Harper's Ferry there is no reason to believe the world would ever have heard of him.

Something *after* Harper's Ferry created the John Brown whose soul goes marching on—a fact in the strange history, not of recent discovery, but definitely announced more than a quarter of a century ago. That something was the heroic, self-sacrificing, transfiguring idealism, which emerged in the storm and stress of Charlestown. It had appeared before in letters, in speeches, and even in the discussions at Dutch Henry's Crossing. This idealism Mr. Wilson finds to be only the mask of a successful hypocrisy and his misinterpretation is the capital and fatal defect of an aggressive and vigorously phrased book. Theories of insincerity—a trait which friends in Massachusetts and enemies in Virginia, with ample opportunities for observation, failed to detect—will not do. A more tenable conclusion, and one which the lapse of time seems to confirm, is that he was "the victim of mental delusions".

LEVERETT W. SPRING.

The Life of Robert Toombs. By ULRICH BONNELL PHILLIPS, Ph.D., Professor of American History, University of Michigan. (New York: The Macmillan Company. 1913. Pp. ix, 281.)

PROFESSOR PHILLIPS'S mastery of the field of Georgia politics needs no reassertion. It is on that basis reinforced by an extensive search for Toombs manuscripts that this work has been reared. Needless to say it is painstaking and detailed. Granted what he has set out to do, few objections are in point; such as are, involve questions of treatment. For example, it is doubtful whether at times there is not too much political detail. You cannot always see the wood for the trees. And yet it is on just this side that the book is strongest. A comparison with the earlier life of Toombs by Stovall emphasizes the superiority of Professor Phillips both in exact knowledge and in skillful delineation of political transitions. An excellent illustration is the way in which it is made plain how Toombs, a typical Southern Whig, was driven, in the Compromise of 1850, through the sheer logic of circumstance, almost to a face-about from his original position. But even in this admirable chapter we could afford to have fewer statistics of Congressional balloting and more of luminous presentment of the central figure. In some later episodes Toombs almost disappears—engulfed, one might say—in the general history of politics. The three great Congressional battles in which Toombs figured previous to 1860—the election of a speaker by the Thirty-First Congress, the Compromise of 1850, the repeal of the Missouri Compromise—are traced through the intricacies of parliamentary war with enthusiastic patience. Whether they justify all of Professor Phillips's conclusions is another matter. When he says of the Compromise of 1850 that if Toombs "had followed the opposite course at any stage, the adjustment would almost certainly have been defeated", he assigns to Toombs a pre-eminence which some of us